



This was her first experience in a combat environment — it was only her third day and the camp had already been attacked.

However, this by far, was not her or her husband’s last incident.

“For the first month and a half or so, it was like you barely heard the alarm. Then it started to get more regular and the alarms were happening all the time,” said Jason.

And pretty soon they had to start wearing their flak vests and Kevlar helmets wherever they went.

“I would say for the majority of the four months ... it got to be a daily thing,” said Christina.

On one occasion a mortar hit about 60 feet from their living trailers. On another occasion, while they were exercising in an empty lot near their living quarters, Jason said he almost stepped on what looked like a sprinkler head. While only a few inches stuck out of the ground, the object was a three-foot long, unexploded rocket sticking out of the ground.

Soldier or civilian, they were facing the same dangers at Camp Anaconda.

Christina also faced dangers outside the camp’s perimeter, when she went to survey a bridge, which had been partially destroyed by an improvised explosive device.

What began as a day-long mission, turned into three days, with over 100 Marines providing security for the team, and still, they came under attack.

“It was only my third camping trip, and we didn’t have tents or cots or anything. I was sleeping on the hard ground in my Kevlar and flak vest,” said Christina.

And one attack was responsible for injuring one of Christina’s team members, Pete Corona. An attack that came close to injuring her as well.

“We were 10 feet away from each other, and he was under a generator that was attached to a HUMVEE that I was sitting in, and this mortar came in,” said Christina. As luck would have it, the round hit the soft ground and only partially detonated. Corona was injured by shrapnel. Fortunately it was not life threatening. His dedication prevailed because even after sustaining his injury, he stayed in Iraq to pursue the mission.

After three nights in the wide-open desert the team finally returned back to camp — covered in dust.

Time, which slowly dwindled by at first, had now gone by quickly.

“When you’re only a month into it, I thought, I have another three months left to go,” said Christina. “You had to fulfill your four months, but overall it was amazing. It flew by.”

And the engineers in Iraq have helped serve not only the combat forces, but are helping to provide Iraqis with essentials.

“Whenever you asked the ones (Iraqis) who were working for us ... they were all unanimous that before ... there was basically no hope for them, and now there is no limit to the possibilities,” said Jason.



Christina Bohrmann stands in front of her living quarters and across the street from the site where a rocket-propelled grenade was found by Jason Bohrmann during physical training.

TEAMWORK

Supporting the Warfighter

Story by
Andrew Stamer

Forward Engineer Support Teams have been integral in improving infrastructure throughout Iraq.

As part of Combined Joint Task Force-7 and working for the 420th Engineer Brigade, the fourth and final FEST-Augmentation packed up their gear and left Iraq with the satisfaction of a job well done.

During the team’s four-month long tenure from Jan. to May, they were able to complete 91 separate missions, and completed assessments, designs and project development estimated at \$422 million, said Capt. Thomas Asbery, resident engineer, the United States Engineer Group, who was one of the FEST-A commanders.

One of the most important missions was a bridge assessment. What made this bridge assessment such a high priority was that it was along the main supply route, which runs from North to South – known as Iraq’s Highway 1.

“When the Iraqis blew up a series of bridges, it cut that supply line and was forcing us and other multinational forces to use alternate supply routes,” said Asbery.

The team collected data on the bridge and used the Corps reach back capability, which is the ability to use Corps assets in other offices to help calculate data that they were collecting in the field. By using Video Tele Conferencing and data transfers, the

field data that had been acquired during the mission was validated and given a military load classification within a day.

“We actually opened the northbound land of traffic within 24 hours based off our assessment,” said Asbery.

While the project was originally only projected to take a day, the team of Asbery, Christina Bohrmann and Pete Corona spent four days in the open desert, being shot at and shelled.

This was Asbery’s first time in a combat situation.

As a Soldier, Asbery knew he had been equipped to deal with combat situations, but wasn’t sure how his civilian counterparts would fair. After spending four days and three nights with them he knew.

“I was very pleased with their performance, their dedication and their professionalism,” said Asbery.

When the team left Iraq, there was a realization that they had accomplished a great deal in a short period of time.

They had made quality of life improvements for Soldiers,



◀ **An Iraqi contractor watches a truck dump gravel to be used as a sub-base for paving on a site where a new Corps Distribution Center is being built.**



did training missions with some of their mapping technology, completed an AAFES project design, a waste water treatment facility, electrical design, tent city layouts, runway extension for the aviation units, hangar renovations, and a list of many other types of projects, said Asbery.

What was unique for this last FEST's rotation was the broad customer base — they supported every branch of service and worked with the Navy, Air Force and the Marines.

“We did a lot of improvements for the Iraqi people ... really trying to make Iraq a better place for the Iraqis as well as the Soldiers,” said Asbery.



Photo by Christina Bohrmann

- ▲ Capt. Thomas Asbery (front) and Pete Corona research a damaged bridge on Iraq's Highway 1.
- ▼ A Soldier stands on point while engineering projects proceed in the background.

Courtesy Photo



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Raising the Bar

Dieter Schwaenen, project engineer, Europe District (left), shows Tom Waters, project engineer, Director of Programs, North Atlantic Division, the great lengths Corps employees in Europe are making to ensure customers are receiving quality products. By working closely with the contractors on Wiesbaden Army Airfield during renovation and construction on the medical and dental centers, the Corps has maintained high quality control standards. To read more about the Corps' quality assurance program in Europe District, see "The Enforcers" on Page 4.